

OCTOBER 2016



# Voice of St. George

SAINT GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
OF THE DESERT

74-109 LARREA ST., PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA



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## THE MASK OF SANITY

*The Mask of Sanity* is a book written in 1941 by the American psychiatrist, Hervey Cleckley and it is still considered a classic. Cleckley noted that many people suffer from psychological disorders which create havoc in their own lives. They appear to be outwardly normal and functioning people, able to mask their basic lack of inner personal character. They suffer from internal chaos which leaves a track record of destructive behavior—often more self-destructive than destructive to others—yet, destructive, just the same.

Among the personality traits considered as “psychologically problematic,” Cleckley listed some of the following (listed in “common” terms):

- superficial charm
- irrational thinking
- unreliability
- insincerity

- lack of remorse
- poor judgment
- lack of “having feelings”
- egocentricity
- incapacity to love

In essence, then, we hide our disorders, bad habits, imperfections, and hang-ups behind the “mask” of “acting normal.” At some point, however, the very issues that haunt us behind “the mask” come out to bite us, pulling us into a world of inner and possibly “outer” darkness.

Taking off this “mask” and actually dealing with the spiritual and emotional imperfections that pull us away from happiness is a matter of “confession,” at least in the sense of admitting the fact that they are a part of our inner lives. But, “confession” is incomplete without repentance and forgiveness. Adding the acts of repentance and forgiveness contributes to turning our “confession”

into the Sacrament of Holy Confession. This Sacrament is the “heart monitor” of one’s personal spiritual life as an Orthodox Christian.

This brings us to the Orthodox Spiritual Life: a discipline of prayer, worship and genuine Sacramental participation.

Examples of such an Orthodox Christian Spiritual Life-Style can be found in the lives of the Saints of our Church. **On October 20th, we will commemorate one such Saint: St. Gerasimos of Cephallonia.**

Other such Saints include **St. Seraphim of Sarov** and a more modern figure, known as the **Elder Joseph the Hesychast**, whose letters on Spiritual Life were published in a book, entitled *Monastic Wisdom*, issued from the Orthodox Christian Monastery in Arizona in 1998:

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 -Dcn. Euthym Kontaxis, M.D.

*"All the yearning of the soul should absorb God...And each one of us, being but clay, should return 'Thine own of Thine own.'" (pg. 326).*

Elder Joseph's words for the soul "to absorb God," are synonymous with St. Seraphim of Sarov saying that our goal in life is to acquire the Holy Spirit. Among Sarov's sayings are the following: *"Acquire a peaceful spirit, and around you thousands will be saved.... Where there is God, there is no evil. Everything coming from God is peaceful, healthy and leads a person to the judgment of his own imperfections and humility...The devil is like a lion, hiding in ambush (Ps 10:19, 1Pe 5:8). He secretly sets out nets of unclean and unholy thoughts. So, it is necessary to break them off as soon as we notice them, by means of pious reflection and prayer. It is necessary that the Holy Spirit enter our heart. Everything good that we do, that we do for Christ, is given to us by the Holy Spirit, but prayer most of all, which is always available to us."* This is the Spiritual Life: prayer in the grace of the Holy Spirit, Who gives us knowledge of Christ our God.

The Spiritual Life is the genuine life of sanity; today's mundane life is "insanity" masked as "sanity." Behaviors which were once in violation of traditional Christian morality are now "masked" as "understandable" - maybe even *acceptable* - norms often requiring a degree of social tolerance, up to the point where they break the law. The words of such Saints as St. Seraphim of Sarov and the life-style of such Saints as St. Gerassimos are perceived as being "out of step" by many who choose to hide the many psychological, spiritual and emotional disorders of people behind the "mask" of "normal" "abnormalities," seeking more acceptance than repentance.

Lest we would be deceived into thinking that we are all "odd balls," let us note that Spiritual Life involves "fighting the good fight," against demons who attack us all. Our initial rejection of demons is at our baptism in Christ, when we enter a Spiritual way of life, daily fighting against the impulses and temptations egged on by demons. Let us keep the prayer that is read at our baptism constantly in our minds: *"Let all adverse powers be crushed beneath the signing of Your Most Holy Cross."*

+FR. THEODORE

## ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR



Dearly Beloved,

Today we begin anew. With the inauguration of another ecclesiastical year, the cycle of the Church calendar begins again. Feasts and fasts will lead us through the life of our Lord and Savior, His Mother, and remember the saints of our Church. Like any new beginning, the Church gives us another opportunity to observe with greater devotion the life in Christ.

A new year also brings with it fresh opportunities to strengthen the lives of our parishes. We can look back on the previous years, learn from them, and use those lessons to freshen up our ministries, bring new energy to them, and edify and inspire those who serve in them, so that the Gospel of Christ can be preached more effectively and rise up over the noise in our often cacophonous society. As we read in the Book of Proverbs, *"Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the markets she raises her voice."* (Proverbs 1:20). The faithful of our Church must hear the words of the Lord, but we must be the ones who speak it to them. Our words must also become actions of service to one another in our parishes, but also to the community around us.

We must also raise our voices about the ills our world faces today. We have the freedom to contact our elected officials and the media to highlight the issues. We cannot waste that freedom on trivial matters, as we often do. First, we must raise our voices about the sufferings and persecutions of Christians in the Middle East and Africa. Christianity is steadily being erased from the lands where it began and the lands we look to for our Orthodox Tradition. We cannot allow our brothers and sisters who face deadly threats on a daily basis to believe that they have been abandoned.

Second, our Archdiocese has become actively involved with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in the campaign to end violence  
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*ECCLESIASTICAL NEW YEAR, continued*

against women. As we have learned, violence against women takes many forms, from traffick- ing, physical and sexual violence, to forced impoverishment. This violence damages the image of God in which each person is created, and as a Church, we must work to intensify awareness on this issue among our parishes and to raise our voices and actions to address it.

Third, in keeping with the long standing practice of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, we must continue to speak out about environmental issues, from the continuing destruction of ecosystems from human activity to the new opportunities for environmen- tal sustainability through new technologies and better stewardship of our natural resources.

As our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has stated, *"The way we respond to the natural environ- ment directly reflects the way we treat human beings. The willingness to exploit the environment is revealed in the willingness to permit avoidable human suffer- ing. So the survival of the natural environment is also the survival of ourselves. When we will understand that a crime against nature is a crime against ourselves and sin against God?"*

As we read these words we must take note that His All Holiness has been teaching us about our responsibility for the created world from the first day of his enthronement as Ecumenical Patriarch, November 2, 1991. To commemorate this historic twenty-fifth anniversary, I hope that each parish of our Metropolis will send him a congratulatory message, especially praising his exemplary lead- ership at the Holy and Great Council of the Or- thodox Church this past June, but also his tireless dedication to the Church and humanity. May he have many years, rightly teaching the Word of Truth!

Dearly beloved, there is so much work to do as Christians, in our parishes, in our homes and in the world. The theme of our Clergy-Laity Con- gress taught us "You are the Voice of Christ in a Changing World." May this New Ecclesiastical

Year, a new beginning, give you the inspiration to be the voice of God's message.

With Love in Christ,

**+ G E R A S I M O S**

Metropolitan of San Francisco

### **PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS**



Tillie Lockshire is retiring as Church Coffee Maker. As you have probably already heard, Tillie is retiring from making coffee every Sunday. We want to thank Tillie for her years of service which she has done with a positive and cheerful atti- tude. We need parishioners to step up and volunteer to make coffee for the Coffee Hour after Church weekday services. I proposed a plan last year to have a parishioner or pa- rishioners to make coffee for one month at a time (4 Sundays). There was only one per- son that volunteered! If you like to have a cup of coffee after church, consider volunteering. You do not need to be a member of Philopto- chos. In September we had 2 volunteers. One to take the remainder of September and one for the month of October. But, we need more of you! Tillie will train. Contact Tillie Lockshire or Linda Kallis.

#### Church "Needs List" Decision

After our members discussed the various items on the "Needs List" for the Church at our Sep- tember General Meeting, we voted to donate monies for the Lighting Project that will replace the lights under the Church dome to LED lights. This will reduce energy costs.

#### Save the date

Plan on attending the General Meeting in Nov- ember. We are having an author as a guest speaker. All parishioners welcome. More infor- mation to come.

#### Future Dates:

- A. Monday, October 3, 11:00 .a.m. - Board Meeting
- B. Monday, October 10, 11:30 a.m. - General Meeting

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*PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS, continued*

- C. Saturday, November 12, 1:00 p.m. - Thanks giving Dinner with AHEPA
- D. Monday, November 14, 11:30 a.m. Special General Mtg. with all parishioners
- F. Monday, December 5, 11:00 a.m. - Board Meeting
- G. Saturday, December 10, 11:30 a.m. - Annual Christmas Luncheon  
 –LINDA KALLIS,  
 Philoptochos Chapter President

AHEPA/PHILOPTOCHOS EVENTSAVE THE DATE

AHEPA is planning on preparing a full Thanksgiving Dinner with all the trimmings on Saturday, November 12, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. Philoptochos is planning on volunteering support with advertising and selling tickets. More information to follow in the Ladder and Voice.

– WYNN STORTON,  
 AHEPA Chapter President  
 –LINDA KALLIS,  
 Philoptochos Chapter President

SAVE THE DATE

April 21-23, 2017: St. George Golf Tournament and the 20th Anniversary of St. George Feast Day in our church. We will have the honor of hosting His Eminence, Metropolitan Gerasimos as we celebrate this special anniversary of our parish!

AHEPA NEWS

**Next meeting scheduled for October 12th , 6:30 pm at St George Church.**



But, before that meeting we have a **Supreme visitation on October 2nd.** **Supreme President of AHEPA Andrew Zacharides** will be stopping for lunch. Luncheon scheduled at 12:30 pm at the Stuff Pizza patio at the Westfield mall. All are invited and encouraged to show support. **Supreme Governor George Booras** and **Supreme Treasurer Carl Hollister** and **District Governor Alex Soles** will all be in

attendance as well. They will then head off to visit other chapters in our district.

**OXI Day is celebrated on October 28th. "Ohi" Day** commemorates the rejection by Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas of the ultimatum made by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini on 28 October 1940. The Hellenic forces counterattacked the invading Italian forces at the mountains of Pindus and the Greek Resistance was very strong in defeating the Axis occupation.

**November 6th,** AHEPA Chapter 528 will be working with Saint George Church with Veterans day celebrations.

We are sorry to lose 2 brother Ahepans in the past months, **Steve Geotas** and **Col. Steve Pisanos**. May there memories be eternal! We begin this year enthusiastically working to grow our membership to promote the values of AHEPA and the Orthodox Church.

I hope to put out a newsletter which will accompany the email version of the St George Voice to outline the goals and purpose of AHEPA Chapter 528 and the opportunities to help our church, faith, families in this St George community.

*Welcome Home if you have been away for the summer.*

– WYNN STORTON,  
 AHEPA 528 Chapter President

**FEAST OF THE HOLY GREAT MARTYR DEMETRIOS**

As we know, the Church went through difficult times, especially when the Roman Empire decided to persecute and oppress Christianity. The greatest test to the Church was the great persecution under Diocletian, which took place from 300 A.D. until after 306 A.D. When this great test took place, the Church was changing a lot. One of the reasons the Empire saw Christianity as a threat was how much the Church had changed.



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*THE MARTYR ST. DEMETRIOS , continued*

In the Empire, a great number of people believed in Christ. In some areas, even senatorial families had accepted and loved Christ. Many soldiers, even officers, were converted Christians. Even relatives of Roman governors were converts. What was the Empire to do with these citizens who did not worship the Greek and Roman gods or salute the Emperor as a divine person (not common in the West, but assumed in the East)?

Some leaders were open to "Eastern religions," while others, such as Galerius, Diocletian, and others saw this new religion as a great threat to the culture of the Roman Empire. Here was a religion which deified a criminal who was crucified by a Roman magistrate. In response to the growing tide of Christianity, Diocletian ordered that one would have to offer sacrifice to the Emperor in order to be a "legal" citizen, or face changes equal to treason.

St. Demetrios was a Roman officer who believed in Christ. This was the kind of thing that annoyed the Roman emperors. The martyrdom of St. Demetrios took place in Thessaloniki, which was Galerius' capitol. He had been denounced by fellow soldiers for being a Christian and he was imprisoned. The St. Demetrios Cathedral in Thessaloniki is the site of his burial, following his death as a martyr. His Feast Day is **October 26th**.

But first, a young Christian named Nestor gained the blessing of St. Demetrios to fight a giant named Lyaos, since Galerius wanted pagans to fight Christians. It was a David versus Goliath situation, and Nestor won the fight. The angry emperor had both Nestor and Demetrios put to death. Under the St. Demetrios Cathedral to this day, one can see the bath house where he had been imprisoned. He is called "Myrrh-streaming," since in Byzantine times, a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh emanated from his tomb.

—MATTHEW DAVIS

## MESSAGE FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL PRESIDENT



*"Two [are] better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm [alone]? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."* - Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12

Our annual church festival is coming up in 5 months. Whereas that seems far away, planning started months ago. As many of you know, the parish council has asked **George Argyros** to continue in his role as festival chairperson and he has graciously accepted. We had our first meeting earlier this month and as the weeks go by the planning and preparations will become busier and more intense. As always, our goal is to have a successful festival!

It is during events such as these that we need each other more than ever. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon reminds us that we can accomplish more when we work with each other. In our case, "two" refers not literally to two people, but to all of us. All of our time, effort and energies together are almost all we need to hold a festival that everyone will enjoy!

However, "two" is not enough. With God working with us, we will be stronger than we ever could on our own. This will be my 21<sup>st</sup> festival with our church and I am forever impressed with how everyone and everything comes together every time! We are blessed to have God within our midst and the more we recognize that He is on our team (or, more accurately, we are on His team) the more we can remember that, "a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

—JIM CHRISTOPOULOS,  
Parish Council President

## SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday School classes for this school year, 2016-2017, began on **September 18, 2017**. Serving as Sunday School superintendent this year is **Fotini Krespis**. This year's Sunday School teachers are: **Deacon Euthym Kontaxis**, his wife, **Krisann Kontaxis**, **Mariya Dunkel** and **Melissa Hawkins**.

The Sunday School theme for this year is: The Life of Christ: The New Testament. Throughout this school year, Sunday School students will be involved in many activities:

**Sunday, October 16th** - Pumpkin Painting - After church we will bring in lunch and then all of the kids will paint pumpkins for halloween. Thank you to **Fotini and Nick Krespis** for leading this activity!! **Please let us know if you will be attending so we can purchase enough pumpkins.**

**Sunday, December 11th** - Christmas Program - Thank you to **Deacon Euthym and Krisann Kontaxis** for organizing this annual event. More on this to come. Please mark off this date on your calendar and make sure that your child(ren) can participate.

**Saturday, December 24th** - Christmas Caroling - Each year we visit 2-3 of our fellow parishioners at their home to bring them joy through our singing (yes, we sound great!). We start after vespers services (around 10:30/11:00 a.m.) and afterwards we go out to lunch. Father Ted and I will identify those who we will visit. I will contact you in early December to find out who is available.

**Sunday, March 5th** (the week following our festival) - Stations of the Cross - We will visit the Stations of the Cross at Shield's Date Garden in Indio. On this, the first Sunday in Lent, we will share with our students an important time in the life of our Savior. Lunch will be included. Thank you to **Mariya Dunkel** for making this happen!

On their first day of Sunday School, the students were asked: "Why do you like coming to Sunday

School class?" The following are the answers that they gave to this question:

- To worship God
- To help in the altar
- To hear the Gospels
- To learn about Church
- To help pass the tray
- To pray
- For Holy Communion
- For the bread (antidoron)

Let us all do our best to inspire our children to live their Orthodox Christian Faith.

## COLORING BOOK GROUP

The Adult Coloring Group kicked off the new Ecclesiastical year with a coloring session and luncheon on **Friday, September 16th**.



Twelve parishioners joined us and enjoyed a Martha Stewart inspired luncheon of French Bistro style lentil soup, salmon on rye canapés, prosciutto & fig crepe roll-ups, roasted chickpeas, and fresh watermelon slices. After lunch the group began the coloring session with many attendees bringing their own coloring books with them to work on while others opted for selecting one of the provided coloring pages. A raffle completed the session with everyone taking home a small raffle prize.

Adult coloring began as a fad about a year and a half ago and has developed into a full-on craze. One can purchase coloring books and supplies at many locations now, including Michael's craft store, Barnes & Noble bookstore, & even your local pharmacy and grocery stores. It seems to be everywhere! There's a good reason for this. Let me tell you about my discovery.

My journey with adult coloring and other art inspired hobbies began in the hospital as a daily therapy while being treated for leukemia. The hospital provided a voluntary two hour "recreational therapy" session every day, which was attended with other cancer patients. The

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*COLORING BOOK GROUP, continued*

sessions helped by providing focus for the patients, so that for a period of time, one could briefly, not think about their cancer and focus on creativity. The coloring, for me, helped dealing with the side effects of treatment. But it was not only the coloring, but the interaction and conversation between others that is the true bonus and reward of adult coloring! So, as a result of this experience, we at St. George now can participate in the benefits and healing power of art and conversation with others during the sessions. We invite all to join us!

The next Adult Coloring Session will be held on **Friday, October 14th at noon** in the church hall. Here are a few pictures from our September meeting:



To the left: (from left to right): Josie Desnoyers, Emily Tcharos and Diane Young. To the right (from left to right) Linda Kallis, Linda Bozigian and Debbie Vawter.

—RHONDA LATKOVIC,  
Coloring Book Coordinator

**2017 GREEK FESTIVAL**



At the September Festival meeting the need for volunteers was emphasized. Five-hour shifts during the days of the Festival (Feb. 25-26) are needed. One or two hours of work per shift are not enough. Volunteers are also needed during the weekdays leading up to the Festival to help with preparations. Those who cannot volunteer to work as needed may donate the monies needed to hire workers. **“Donate-**

**a-Shift”** is an option for those who cannot physically do the work required. This will help greatly in reducing costs for hired help. For information as to how much a shift costs, contact **George Argyros**, the 2017 Festival Chairman, or one of the two Festival sub-chairmen, **Jim Christopoulos** and **John Petalas**.

Given below is a “Festival Needs List.” Let each of us see what we can do. Underwriters for Festival needs will be a great blessing for our parish. See the “Needs List” below.

**ST. GEORGE FESTIVAL 2017 NEEDS LIST**

The following are just some of the items needed for our **St. George Greek Festival 2017**, which will take place on **Friday, Saturday and Sunday, February 25-26, 2017**. If you are interested in **donating the monies** for part or all of any one of these items, please contact **Fr. Ted** at (760) 880-5869, or call (760) 568-9901 if interested in supporting our **2017 Festival** in this manner. Receipts and/or acknowledgement will be issued upon receipt of **any donated funds**. We are always most grateful for your support and generosity.

*Description, Quantity and Value of Items Needed*

Beer (Athenian).....	25 cases.....	\$750.00
Butter, Sweet (unsalted.....	600 lbs. ....	\$1,500.00
Chicken Base.....	20 lbs.....	\$75.00
Cheese, Cottage.....	125 lbs.....	\$385.00
Cheese, Parmesan.....	10 lbs... ..	\$40.00
Cucumbers.....	.....	\$100.00
Dinners Rolls.....	300 doz.....	\$350.00
Eggs.....	180 doz. . .	\$155.00
Feta Cheese (5 gal. bucket).....	40 buckets...	\$615.00
Filo.....	.800 lbs ....	\$2,035.00
Flour, bread (25 lbs/bag).....	50bags.....	\$250.00
Flour, regular (25 lbs/bag).....	50 bags.....	\$250.00
Grape leaves (16 oz jar).....	8 cases.....	\$300.00
Cavenders Greek Seasoning.....	1 case.....	\$80.00
Ground Beef.....	800 lbs.....	\$785.00
Gyro.....	1,500 lbs.....	\$3,775.00
Honey.....	150 lbs.....	\$1,145.00
Lamb Chops.....	600 lbs.....	\$3,800.00
Loukanico.....	500 lbs.....	\$1,895.00
Metaxa (1.5 liter).....	12 bottles.....	\$150.00
Milk.....	.....	\$40.00
Nuts, Almonds.....	125 lbs.....	\$200.00
Nuts, Walnuts.....	125 lbs.....	\$425.00

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2017 GREEK FESTIVAL, *continued*Description, Quantity and Value of Items Needed, cont.

Oil, Canola.....	10 gal.....	\$140.00
Oil, Mazola.....	10 gal.....	\$175.00
Oil, Olive.....	12 gal.....	\$350.00
Olives, Kalamata.....	12 kegs.....	\$1,395.00
Onions, Green.....		\$100.00
Onions, Yellow.....	14 sacks.....	\$130.00
Ouzo.....	12 bottles.....	\$1,200.00
Pita.....	80 cases.....	\$1,440.00
Retsina.....	5 cases.....	\$230.00
Rice, Uncle Ben's (25 lbs/bag).....	15-25 lbs.bags...	\$215.00
Salad Mix.....	800 lbs.....	\$600.00
Shortening, Vegetables.....	40 gal.....	\$175.00
Souvlaki, Chicken.....	2,000 pieces....	\$1,500.00
Souvlaki, Pork.....	1,000 pieces....	\$1,000.00
Spinach, Fresh.....	60 lbs.....	\$300.00
Sugar, Granulated (25 lbs / bag).....	50-25 lbs bags....	\$515.00
Sugar, Powedered.....	3 cases.....	\$55.00
Tomatoes.....	30 cases.....	\$450.00
Tzaziki (5 gal/ bucket).....	14 bags.....	\$450.00
Wine, Red.....		\$545.00
Wine, White.....	15 cases.....	\$430.00
Ziti, Pastitsio.....	160 lbs.....	\$375.00

Please note that some prices and quantities are subject to change over time.

Donations are also welcome for underwriting the costs of non-food materials. Please contact **George Argyros** for information regarding donations towards the costs of tents, chairs, etc.

Everyone is asked not to purchase anything for the Church or the Festival without permission to do so. **Any purchases in excess of \$250 without prior written authorization from the Parish Council and/or the Festival Chairman will not be reimbursed and will be considered to be a donation.**

**HOLY AND GREAT SYNOD OF THE  
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH: THE  
SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

*On Orthodox Marriage-Part 1*

1. The institution of the family is threatened today by such phenomena as secularization and moral relativism. The Orthodox Church maintains, as her fundamental and indisputable teaching, that marriage is sacred. The freely entered union of man

and woman is an indispensable precondition for marriage.

2. In the Orthodox Church, marriage is considered to be the oldest institution of divine law because it was instituted simultaneously with the creation of Adam and Eve, the first human beings (Gen 2:23). Since its origin, this union not only implies the spiritual communion of a married couple – a man and a woman – but also assured the continuation of the human race. As such, the marriage of man and woman, which was blessed in Paradise, became a holy mystery, as mentioned in the New Testament where Christ performs *His first sign*, turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, and thus reveals His glory (Jn 2:11). The mystery of the indissoluble union between man and woman is an icon of the unity of Christ and the Church (Eph 5:32).

3. Thus, the Christocentric typology of the sacrament of marriage explains why a bishop or a presbyter blesses this union with a special prayer...The sacredness of the God-established union and the lofty spiritual content of married life explain the affirmation: *So that marriage should be honored among all, and the bed undefiled* (Heb 13:4). That is why the Orthodox Church condemns any defilement of its purity (Eph 5:2-5; 1 Thes 4:4; Heb 13:4ff).

4. A necessary condition of marriage is faith in Jesus Christ, which must be shared by the bridegroom and the bride, man and woman. Consequently, unity in Christ is the foundation of marital unity. Thus, marital love blessed by the Holy Spirit enables the couple to reflect the love between Christ and the Church as a mystery of the Kingdom of God – as the eternal life of humanity in the love of God.

5. Protecting the sacredness of marriage has always been crucially important for the preservation of the family, which reflects the communion of the persons yoked together both in the

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*THE HOLY & GREAT SYNOD: THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE, continued*

Church and in society at large...an essential and creative spiritual force in the sacred institution of the family. It alone ensures the safety and formation of children, both for the spiritual mission of the Church as well as in the life of society.

6. It was always with the necessary strictness and proper pastoral sensibility, in the compassionate manner of Paul, Apostle of the Gentiles (Rom 7:2-3; 1 Cor 7:12-15, 39), that the Church treated both *the positive preconditions* (difference of sexes, legal age, etc.) and *the negative impediments* (kinship by blood and affinity, spiritual kinship, an existing marriage, difference in religion, etc.) for [an Orthodox Christian] joining in marriage...

7. Given our current context, which is unfavorable for the sacrament of marriage and the sacred institution of family, hierarchs and shepherds must actively cultivate their pastoral work in order to protect the faithful, standing by them to fortify their hope shaken by many hardships, and asserting the institution of the family upon an unshakable foundation...since this foundation is the rock which is Christ (Mt 7:25).

8. The pressing issue in society today is marriage, which is the center of the family, and the family is what justifies marriage. Pressure to recognize new forms of cohabitation constitutes a real threat for Orthodox Christians...The main victims of these trends are the couples themselves, and especially the children, since regrettably the children often endure great suffering from an early age, while nonetheless bearing no responsibility for the situation.

9. A civil marriage between a man and a woman registered in accordance with the law lacks sacramental character since it is a simple legalized cohabitation recognized by the State, different from a marriage blessed by God and the Church. The members of the Church who contract a civil marriage ought to be regarded with pastoral responsi-

bility, which is necessary to help them understand the true meaning of marriage and the blessings connected with it.

10. The Church does not allow for her members to contract same-sex unions or any other form of cohabitation apart from marriage. The Church exerts all possible pastoral efforts to help her members who enter into such unions understand the true meaning of repentance and love as blessed by the Church.

11. The grave consequences brought about by this crisis of the institutions of marriage and the family are manifested in the frightening increase in the number of divorces, abortions, and other problems of family life. These consequences constitute a great challenge to the mission of the Church in the modern world, which is why the shepherds of the Church are obligated to make every possible effort to address these problems. The Orthodox Church lovingly invites her children and all people of good will to defend this fidelity to the sacredness of the family.

#### STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Our stewardship total received year-to-date is \$80,303.00. This compares to last year for the same time period of \$105,238.00. We are off (down) by \$24,935.00 or (-24%). At this lower giving level, we are not going to hit our \$130,000.00 annual goal, as we are trending to only \$100,000.00 for the year. This is most concerning.

I feel it is important to bring this to everyone's attention because the church counts on stewardship to pay for the monthly operations of the church. So far this year, expenses have been kept under control even to last year's levels, thanks to our office. However, if our stewardship does not increase, the parish council may be facing some difficult fiscal decisions in the future in regards to our stewardship "crisis" in order to pay our expenses.

As chairperson, it is my responsibility to ask everyone to please reconsider their stewardship commitments. For those who have not yet committed,

*continued on the next page - - - ->*

*STEWARDSHIP UPDATE, continued*

please do so, now. For those who have and are giving, please consider giving more, now.

**Stewardship is not a country club type of membership.** It's also not a cost savings program that gives you an opportunity to use the "club house." Stewardship is the love of God and our joy, gratefulness, and thankfulness in giving back to God for all He has given to us!

"No church ever has a money problem; only a faithfulness problem."

Yours in Christ,  
– RHONDA LATKOVIC  
Stewardship Chairperson

### ANNUAL ST. GEORGE PET BLESSING EVENT

The annual St. George Pet Blessing event will be held Saturday, October 22nd at 9:30 am. Our gates will open at 9:00 am and the first 30 attendees will receive a pet "swag bag"!



This year, as in past years, Animal Samaritans will attend with a few animals up for adoption. Attendees are asked to bring canned, boxed, or bagged treats or food to donate to Animal Samaritans for their shelter.

This year we will be selling Greek food items to eat on the premises or as takeout. Greek salads, tiropita, and galactobouriko will be available for purchase.

Our special guests this year will be a local Chiropractor, **Dr. Robert Edelburg**, who offers pet massage therapy at his office in Palm Springs. He will be available to demonstrate pet massage. Our other special guest will be a local AKC Dog Show Judge, **Mr. Darryl Vice**, who will be available to answer any questions you may have. His specialties are the Toy group, the Terrier group, the Non-Sporting group, & the Working group in dog show competition. Mr. Vice also has international experience and has

performed at shows in Austria, New Zealand, China, Thailand, Canada, & Ireland as well as all over the United States.

We ask that all parishioners of St. George with pets (or not!) to attend the blessing event in support of our community. Please reach out to your friends, family, and business associates and invite them to attend as well.

This is a Parish Council sponsored event. Any questions on the Pet Blessing event, please contact Rhonda Latkovic or Linda Kallis.

### SO. CALIFORNIA GREEK FESTIVALS

#### St. Nectarios Parish – Covina, California

**When:** Sep 30 - Oct 2, 2016, Fri 5-10 pm, Sat-Sun 12-10 pm

**Where:** 20340 E. Covina Blvd., Covina, CA

**Cost:** \$2, children 12 and under are Free

**Parking:** Additional Parking at Charter Oaks High School

**Info:** [www.saintnectarios.org](http://www.saintnectarios.org), (626) 967-5524

#### St. Sophia Cathedral – Los Angeles, California

**When:** Oct 7-9, 2016, Fri 5-11 pm, Sat noon - 11 pm, Sun noon - 10 pm (tentatively)

**Where:** 1324 S. Normandie, Los Angeles, CA 90006

**Cost:** \$5, Seniors \$3, kids under 12 free

**Info:** [www.lagreekfest.com](http://www.lagreekfest.com), (323) 737-2424

**Note:** St. Sophia is next to a Latino Catholic church and invites a Latin band to play a set on Saturday and Sunday when the Greek band takes a break.

#### St. Nicholas Parish- Temecula, California

**When:** Oct 15-16, 2016, Sat 10 am - 9 pm, Sun 11 am to 8 pm

**Where:** Old Town Temecula Civic Center, 41000 Main Street, **Temecula**, CA 92590

**Cost:** Adults \$2, Children under 12 - \$1.

**Parking:** Free parking at Old Town Garage, 28690 Mercedes Street, Temecula, CA 92590

**Info:** [www.stnicholastemecula.org](http://www.stnicholastemecula.org) (951) 296-6207

Fliers announcing these Festivals are available in our parish hall.

# BirthChoice

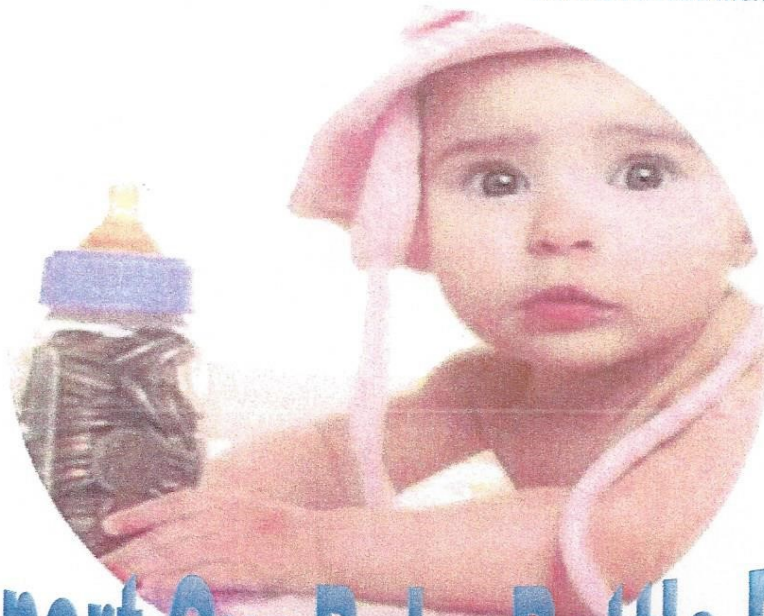
of the Desert

79440 Corporate Center Dr. Ste 106

La Quinta, California 92253

(760) 775-5683

[www.DesertBirthChoice.org](http://www.DesertBirthChoice.org)



## Support Our Baby Bottle Drive

*St. George Greek Orthodox Church*

*For More Information*

*Louise Dobbs Barringer (760) 770-8001*

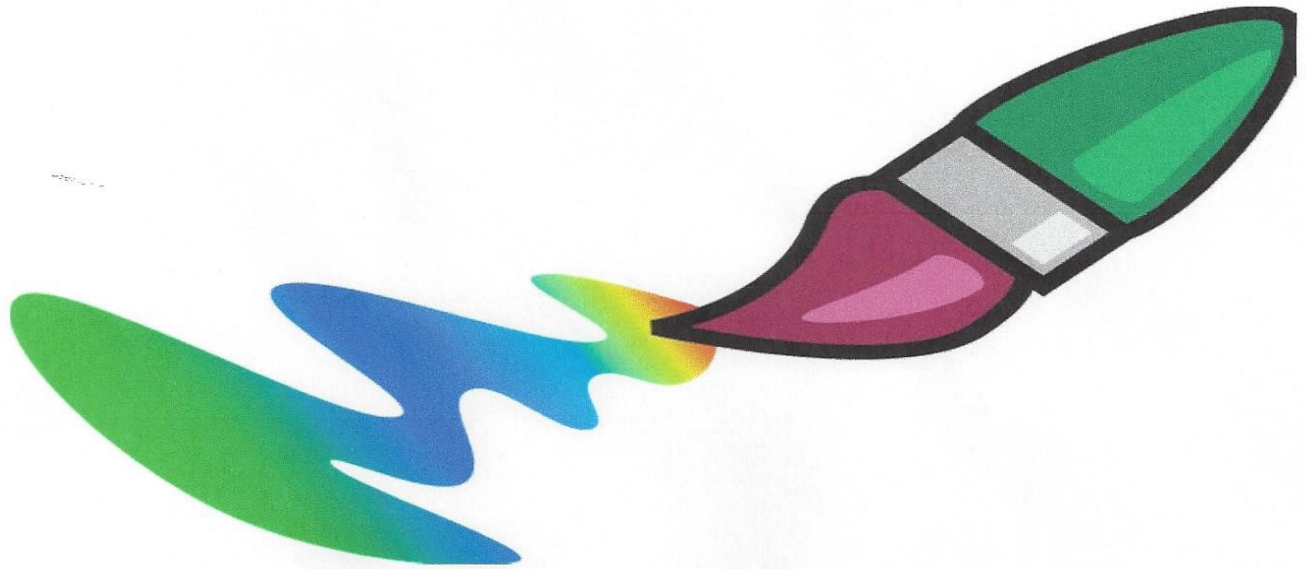
Louise Dobbs Barringer, and Rhonda Latkovic will have a table set-up in the Parish Hall displaying how parishioner can help to support young girls, teen mothers with their babies who refused to abort, however they made the right decision to keep their babies no matter what the circumstances! May God bless them because they are trying; and as, Christians, each one of us can help give Life to one child. All it takes is one donation or gift of about \$50.00 to purchase one of the following: baby diapers (infants to six months), blankets, little booties/hats (see table display in Parish Hall). The organization with which we are working with regard to this ministry is Birth Choice of the Desert, a charity serving to encourage parents to give live birth to their pre-born babies.

The Baby Bottle Kick-off Campaign will commence on **October 2nd** and continue through **October 8th**. Attorney **John Jimenez** from Birth Choice of the Desert will provide more details on Sunday, October 2nd.

Inside a baby bottle is a form to be completed so that appropriate "thank you" notes can be sent out to those who participate in this effort. Make checks payable to Birth Choice of the Desert; place the check along with the completed form back inside the baby bottle and return it to the Birth Choice of the Desert Baby Bottle basket (near the display table) or to the Outreach Committee chairperson.

A famous quote: "Do not give out of your excess, give until it hurts, unconditionally, and God promises to bless you"! This is sponsored by the Outreach Program a St. George Greek Orthodox Church Project. **REMEMBER: ALL DONATIONS TOWARDS THIS PROJECT ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE!**

— LOUISE DOBBS BARRINGER,  
Outreach Committee Chairperson



# **ADULT COLORING SESSION & LUNCHEON**

**When: Friday, October 14<sup>th</sup> @ noon-2pm**

**Where: St. George church hall**

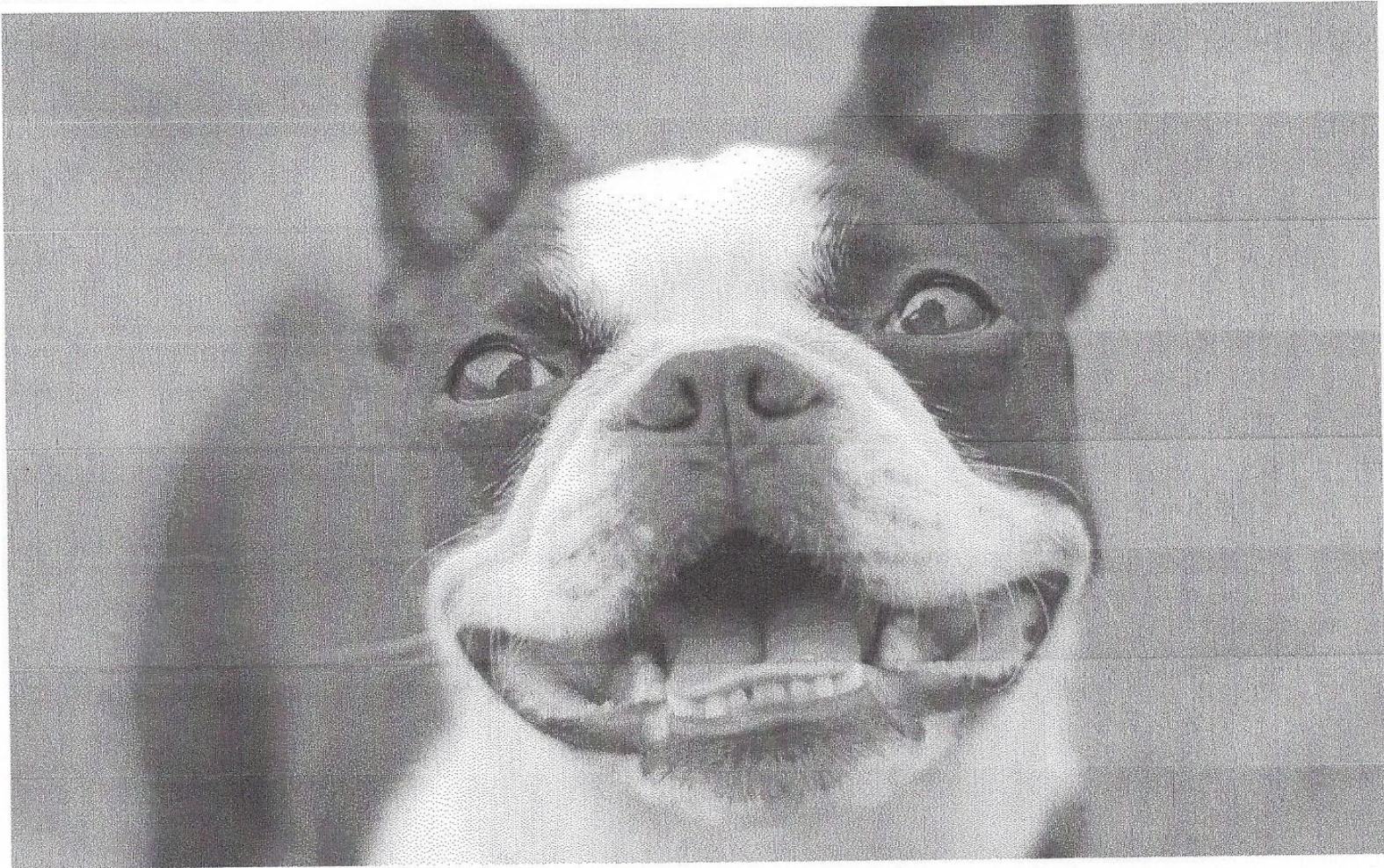
**RSVP: By October 9<sup>th</sup> to Rhonda Latkovic**

**Lunch will be served at noon with coloring to follow. A \$5.00 minimum donation is requested. Lunch will be a pumpkin inspired menu! There will also be raffle. Coloring supplies provided. Please join us!**

# PET BLESSING

OCTOBER 22, 2016 @ 9:00 AM

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH



## ANNUAL PET BLESSING

Please join us for our annual pet blessing event on Saturday, October 22, 2016. Gates open at 9 AM with the first 30 attendees to receive a pet "swag bag"! The blessing service will begin at 9:30 AM.

Special guests include Dr. Robert Edelburg, Chiropractor, who will demonstrate pet massage therapy and Mr. Darryl Vice, AKC International Dog Show Judge, who can offer advice on those interested in showing their pet.

Animal Samaritans will be on hand with pets available for adoption. Attendees are asked to bring

bagged, boxed, or canned food or treats for donation.

Greek food items will be available for sale including tiro pita, greek salad, & greek pastries.

There will also be a raffle held. Please join us!

**What:** Pet Blessing Event

**When:** October 22, 2016 @ 9 am

**Where:** St. George Greek Orthodox Church  
74109 Larrea St. Palm Desert, CA  
ph. (760)568-9901



# SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, April 23, 2017

FEAST DAY OF ST. GEORGE

HOSTING:

HIS EMINENCE,  
METROPOLITAN GERASIMOS

of

SAN FRANCISCO

On the occasion of the:

20th ANNIVERSARY OF CELEBRATING OUR PATRON SAINT IN  
OUR ST. GEORGE PARISH CHURCH EDIFACE!

THIS CELEBRATION INCLUDES:

**St. George Golf Tournament at Desert Willow  
Resort in Palm Desert: Friday and Saturday, April 21-22.**



April 21, 2017: Friday afternoon golf followed by steak dinner at the church.

April 22, 2017: Saturday morning golf followed by Greek-style dinner at the church...live music, dancing and fun!

More details and information to follow in the months ahead.  
**JOIN US!**